



U P D A T E

St. Lucie County

December 15, 2006

**A Monthly Update
of Current Events
and Happenings
within St. Lucie**

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This update is published monthly by the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners' Public Information Office. Direct inquiries to Erick Gill, PIO, St. Lucie County 2300 Virginia Avenue Fort Pierce, FL 34982 772.462.6421 gille@stlucieco.gov

Board of County Commissioners Special Meetings & Workshops Scheduled

- There will be NO Board of County Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, December 26, 2006, due to the County's observance of the Holiday.
- There will be NO Board of County Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, January 2, 2007, due to the County's observance of the New Year.
- The Board of County Commissioners will hold a Workshop on Federal Funding on Thursday, January 11, 2007, at 2 p.m. in Conference Room 3.
- Party in the Park will be held Saturday, January 20, 2007, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Fort Pierce Inlet State Park.

St. Lucie County Extension Opens Walton Road Office

Do you have bugs? Do you need to know how to control an infestation? Are you spraying pesticides correctly? Do you need a pesticide license? Do you have invasive plant problems? If these questions sound familiar or you have others, you can now call the St. Lucie Extension Office to receive an answer. The staff is located on the second floor of the Walton Road Annex at 1664 SE Walton Road, Port St. Lucie. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Call the staff at (772) 337-5684 or stop by for a visit and bring your questions with you.

Burn Ban

St. Lucie County officials, in conjunction with the Division of Forestry and the St. Lucie County Fire District, have issued a county-wide burn ban effective immediately. Until further notice, no outside burning or any type of fireworks will be permitted until the substantial rainfall lowers the drought index. The drought index for St. Lucie County is currently 650. A burn ban is typically issued once the drought index reaches above the 550 mark. The burn ban includes burn barrels, fireworks and campfires. Division of Forestry staff and Fire District officials will be permitting land clearing and citrus burning on a case-by-case basis. As in previous years, the County will continue to monitor the situation on a weekly basis and take additional steps as needed until the drought index is once again satisfactory. The St. Lucie County Fire District will continue its task force response to all brush fires.

All Terrain Vehicles on Unpaved Roads

The Legislature recently enacted Section 316.2123, Florida Statutes, effective October 1, 2006, which allows all-terrain vehicles to be operated during the daytime by a licensed driver or a minor under the supervision of a licensed driver on unpaved roadways where the posted speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour. The newly created section 316.2123 contains a provision which allows the County to be exempt from such section if "the governing body of the County, by a majority vote, following a noticed public hearing, votes to exempt the County from such section. On Dec. 5, the Board of County Commissioners adopted proposed Ordinance 06-051, exempting the County from allowing all-terrain vehicles to be operated during the daytime by a licensed driver or a minor under the supervision of a licensed driver on unpaved roadways where the posted speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour.

Historical Museum Special Exhibit on Alligators Now Open Through February 2007

Alligators abound at the St. Lucie County Historical Museum's special exhibit "Alligators: Dragons in Paradise" open now through February. The exhibit, on loan from the Museum of Florida History, explores alligator fact, fantasy and fascination dating from prehistoric times through modern day. Visitors of all ages will enjoy discovering the exhibit's educationally entertaining displays of alligator history and legends, hides and specimens, souvenirs and memorabilia. A recreation of an alligator nest and eggs, hands-on natural history displays, a comparison of alligators and crocodiles and an "Alligator IQ Test" also highlight the exhibit. "Alligators: Dragons in Paradise" runs through February at the St. Lucie County Historical Museum, 414 Seaway Drive at Museum Pointe Park on the South Causeway Island in Fort Pierce. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. and Sunday from noon until 4 p.m. A modest admission is charged. The Museum's 16 permanent exhibits of local history, the 1908 Gardner House, and the current special exhibit "Alligators: Dragons in Paradise" offer an entertaining and educational journey through the county's rich colorful heritage. Nearby Museum Pointe Park and the Fort Pierce Inlet provide a wonderfully relaxing setting for a family picnic. For further information or to book a group tour, please contact Anne Sinnott, museum educator, at (772) 462-1891.

Environmental Resources Department Announces Nature Program

The St. Lucie County Environmental Resources Department will kick off its 2006-07 Nature Program Series this December at various Environmentally Significant Land sites.

Saturday, Dec. 16 from 10 a.m. - noon - **Butterflies of Paleo Hammock**. Walk through a hammock of giant oaks, hickories and cabbage palms in search of nature on a small scale. A naturalist will help identify all the "little buggers" that you find under rocks, logs and on plants and in the air. Anyone wishing to participate needs to register at least one day in advance. Programs are free, but limited to the first 15 people. To register or for more information, please call (772) 462-2526 or visit www.stlucieco.gov/erd.

Upcoming Events at the Oxbow Eco-Center

St. Lucie Regional Herp Society ~ Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. Guests are encouraged to attend this free event and learn more about snakes, lizards, frogs and other reptiles.

Guided Canoe/Kayak Tours ~ Saturday, Dec. 16 at 9 a.m. Paddlers will depart from White City Park on Midway Road and travel down to the Oxbow canoe dock and back to White City Park. The fee is \$10 per person. Children 5 - 7 are free. Reservations and prepayment is required. For more information, please call (772) 785-5842.

Guided Hikes ~ Every Saturday at 10 a.m. Join an Oxbow naturalist as they lead visitors along a series of trails, discussing the plants and wildlife that live in the different habitats along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River. For more information about all Oxbow Eco-Center events call the staff at (772) 785-5833 or visit www.stlucieco.gov/erd/oxbow.

Fort Pierce Library December Nature Series Programs with Captain Chop Lege

Friday, Dec. 15 at 1 p.m. - **"Walk & Talk"** at Bear Point Sanctuary on A1A, South Hutchinson Island.

Thursday, Dec. 21 at 3 p.m. - **"Birds, Butterflies and Bobcats"** - Learn how these unique creatures impact our ecosystems and how we impact theirs.

Friday, Dec. 22 at 1 p.m. - **"Walk & Talk"** at Vitolo Family Park on A1A, South Hutchinson Island.

Thursday, Dec. 28 at 3 p.m. - **"Life Among the Cypress and Mangroves"** - Learn how our wildfire is closely associated with different types of Mangroves and Cypress and how these trees create habitat for a number of different species.

Friday, Dec. 29 at 1 p.m. - **"Walk & Talk"** - at Bear Point Sanctuary on A1A, South Hutchinson Island.

The Fort Pierce Library is located at 101 melody Lane, Fort Pierce. These programs are free and open to the public. Reservations may be required, as space is limited. For more information, visit www.st-lucie.lib.fl.us or call 772-462-1615.

Joseph E. Smith, District 1 • Doug Coward, District 2 • Paula A. Lewis, District 3
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